



Fish Facts

Think “factory farm” and most of us envision millions of chickens and pigs crammed into dismally small spaces, or cattle on feedlots. But there’s another kind of factory farm—fish farms. And they’re just as toxic to human health and the environment as their land-based counterparts. More than half of all fish consumed in the U.S. now comes from industrial factory-scale fish farms. Two of the most popular fish items on restaurant menus are factory farm salmon and shrimp. Factory-farm salmon and fish threaten wild salmon and other marine species by spreading disease (and now GMO-related risks). They also contaminate coastal waters and the ocean with toxic chemicals and fish feed. As for your health? Natural health experts say avoid factory-farm fish and larger fish (who have had more time to absorb toxins). Instead, consume only wild Alaskan salmon, or smaller fish species, such as anchovies, sardines and herring. orgcns.org/2GutohC



Drastic Deregulation

Think genetically modified salmon is a bad idea? Wait ‘til you hear what kind of GMO animals Recombinetics, Inc., the “Monsanto of the genetically modified animal industry,” wants to unleash on the market. Recombinetics wants to genetically engineer pigs specifically to withstand a miserable life in factory farms. The St. Paul-based biotech company wants to keep the FDA from having anything to do with regulating GMO pigs, or any other GMO animals that could end up in the food supply.

Recombinetics president & CEO Tammy Lee Stanock recently published an opinion piece that argued for ending FDA oversight of genetically modified animals in favor of “putting the USDA exclusively in charge of regulating all food animals.”

The advantage for Recombinetics is obvious. The FDA uses its regulations for animal drugs to review the safety of genetically modified food animals, such as GMO salmon. But the USDA has no process whatsoever for evaluating the safety of animals created through novel technologies, including the gene editing technology used by Recombinetics. Take Action: orgcns.org/2GT1Tfi

Must-See TEDx Talk

Everything changed for Dr. Tyrone Hayes when in 1998, the largest chemical company in the world, Syngenta, asked him to use his expertise to try and understand if its top-selling product, atrazine, interfered with the hormones of frogs.

Hayes, an American biologist and professor of Integrative Biology at University of California, Berkeley, discussed in his TEDx Berkeley talk the results of exposing African clawed frogs in his lab to atrazine. He presented an image up on the big screen of frog testes, showing a considerable difference between the controlled and exposed groups, and said: “The controlled testes, if you look under the microscope, is full of sperm soldiers ready to go. The atrazine-treated testes, the testicular tubules are filled with cellular debris.”

Hayes explained how after exposure to atrazine, frogs that were genetic males became completely functioning reproductive females. In another frog species, he showed the gonads with “eggs that are bursting through the surface of the male’s testes.” Yikes.

orgcns.org/2GWeNpC

On a Roll

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)—more like the U.S. Corporation Protection Agency—has been on a roll lately when it comes to rolling back regulations intended to protect people and the environment. Next up? The EPA is threatening to kill the Agricultural Worker Protection Standards, EPA regulations intended to protect farmworkers from pesticide poisoning. At least 20,000 farmworkers are victims of pesticide poisoning each year. Pesticide exposure also leads to higher rates of birth defects in children of farmworkers compared to the general population. We’d prefer that food be grown without pesticides. Until that happens, your best bet to avoid them as a consumer is to choose organic and regenerative products. Take Action: orgcns.org/2uSyfC2

Diagnosis: ‘Critical’

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) reports that land degradation has reached the “critical” stage—and 3.2 billion people could find themselves affected, either by mass migration or wars. Who’s to blame for the mess we’re in? Industrial agriculture tops the list, according to an IPBES press release.

Prof. Robert Scholes, co-chair of the study said: “With negative impacts on the well-being of at least 3.2 billion people, the degradation of the Earth’s land surface through human activities is pushing the planet towards a sixth mass species extinction. Avoiding, reducing and reversing this problem, and restoring degraded land, is an urgent priority to protect the biodiversity and ecosystem services vital to all life on Earth and to ensure human well-being.”

As OCA’s Ronnie Cummins recently wrote, the majority of migrants leave their land for greener pastures—in the literal sense—because the land in their own communities and countries has become too degraded to produce food or sustain livelihoods. We know how to fix this. orgcns.org/2GxWiaT

‘Crumb-y’ Situation

Obesity and chronic illness. Water pollution. Antibiotic-resistance public health crisis. Air pollution. Small farmer bankruptcies. Dangerous working conditions. Rainforest destruction. Soil degradation. Deteriorating local economies and communities. Name a problem in need of a solution, and we’ll show you how it’s connected to industrial factory farms. We can approach each of these problems in isolation as if they aren’t all interconnected. We can settle for little crumbs of incremental change here and there. Or we can look at the big picture. We can single out the common culprit at the center of all these health and environmental disasters. And we can do something.

If we don’t clean up our act, soon, we’re looking at massive crises on a global scale. The scientists and policymakers and multi-national corporations aren’t going to take the lead. As an organization, we’re taking on factory farms in the courts—and winning. We’re spreading the message far and wide—and repeatedly—that factory farms have to go. We’re pushing for a new kind of Farm Bill, one that supports the right kind of farmers producing the right kind of food. We’re working on the ground, in the U.S. and beyond, to promote and facilitate a global transition away from degenerative factory farming (which as we all know, isn’t really farming) to an alternative model that addresses every single one of the issues listed above.

It’s not an easy battle going up against the Tysons and Cargills, Monsantos and DowDuponts, the deceptive brands like Ben & Jerry’s and its factory farm ice cream. But it’s the most important battle of our lives. And we’re way past the point where we can just settle for crumbs. orgcns.org/2pMNYxU